

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of communicating information within a network-based auction facility, the method including:

facilitating creation of a note pertaining to a selected aspect of an on-line auction facilitated by the network-based auction facility;

associating the note with the selected aspect of the on-line auction; and

displaying a note indicator to indicate an association of the note with the selected aspect of the on-line auction when displaying information concerning the selected aspect on a display unit of a network device.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the selected aspect comprises a user of the network-based auction facility.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the selected aspect comprises an item offered for auction via the network-based auction facility.

4. The method of claim 1 including associating the note with multiple selected aspects of the on-line auction.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein the note includes type information identifying the note as being of a first type of a predetermined set of note types.
6. The method of claim 5 wherein the facilitation of the creation of the note includes providing a menu of the predetermined set of note types for user selection.
7. The method of claim 5 wherein the type information indicates a reason for the generation of the note.
8. The method of claim 1 wherein the facilitation of the creation of the note includes providing a user interface via which an administrator of the network-based auction facility is prompted to identify the selected aspect of the on-line auction.
9. The method of claim 8 wherein the selected aspect comprises a user and the user interface prompts the administrator to input a user identifier.

10. The method of claim 8 wherein the selected aspect comprises an item offered for auction via the network-based auction facility and the user interface prompts the administrator to input an item identifier.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein the facilitation of the creation of the note includes calling a note function from any one of a plurality of administrative functions implemented by the network-based auction facility.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein the note function comprises an Application Program Interface (API).

13. The method of claim 1 wherein the display of the note indicator includes calling a note function that searches a plurality of notes to locate a note based on the selected aspect.

14. The method of claim 1 wherein the display of the note indicator comprises displaying a graphic icon adjacent a text identifier for the selected aspect.

15. A method of communicating information concerning a user of

a network-based auction facility, the method including:

providing a note creation function to facilitate creation of a note concerning the user of the network-based auction facility;  
and

automatically invoking the note creation function from one of a plurality of administrative applications of the network-based auction facility,

where the note creation function associates the note with the user, as identified by an administrator of the network-based auction facility to the note creation function.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein the note creation function invokes a note creation user interface that presents a predetermined set of note types for selection by the administrator, each note type providing a reason for creation of the note.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the note creation interface presents the predetermined set of note types for selection to the administrator as a drop-down menu.

18. The method of claim 16 wherein the note creation user interface prompts the user for any one of a group of information items to be included within the note concerning the user including a user identifier and whether the user is to be suspended.

19. The method of claim 15 including providing a note search function that facilitates the searching of a plurality of notes based on user information.

20. The method of claim 1 including providing a note search function that facilitates the searching of a plurality of notes based on auction item information.

21. The method of claim 1 including providing a note search function that facilitates the searching of a plurality of notes based on type information, specifying a reason for the creation of the note.

22. The method of claim 15 including providing a note search function that facilitates searching of a plurality of notes based on addressor information.

23. The method of claim 15 including providing a note search function that facilitates searching of a plurality of notes based on

addressee information.

24. The method of claim 19 wherein the note search function requires verification of identity of the administrator before permitting the search.

25. The method of claim 15 including purging the note after an indicated expiration period.

26. A machine-readable medium storing a sequence of instructions that, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to:

facilitate creation of data pertaining to a selected aspect of an on-line auction facilitated by a network-based auction facility;

associate the data with the selected aspect of the on-line auction; and

display a data indicator to indicate an association of the data with the selected aspect of the on-line auction when displaying information concerning the selected aspect on a display unit of a network device.

27. A system to communicate information within a network-based auction facility, the system including:

a note creation application to facilitate creation of a note pertaining to a selected aspect of an on-line auction facilitated by the network-based auction facility, and to associate the note with the selected aspect of the on-line auction; and

a note display application to display a note indicator to indicate an association of the note with the selected aspect of the on-line auction when displaying information concerning the selected aspect on a display unit of a network device.

28. The system of claim 27 wherein the selected aspect comprises a user of the network-based auction facility.

29. The system of claim 27 wherein the selected aspect comprises an item offered for auction via the network-based auction facility.

30. The system of claim 1 wherein the note creation application is to associate the note with multiple selected aspects of the on-line auction.

31. The system of claim 27 wherein the note includes type information identifying the note as being of a first type of a predetermined set of note types.

32. The system of claim 31 wherein the note display application is to generate a menu of the predetermined set of note types for user selection.

33. The system of claim 31 wherein the type information indicates a reason for the generation of the note.

34. The system of claim 1 wherein the note display application is to provide a user interface via which an administrator of the network-based auction facility is prompted to identify the selected aspect of the on-line auction.

35. The system of claim 34 wherein the selected aspect comprises a user and the user interface prompts the administrator to input a user identifier.

36. The system of claim 34 wherein the selected aspect comprises an item offered for auction via the network-based auction facility and the user interface prompts the administrator to input an item



identifier.

37. The system of claim 27 wherein the note creation application includes a note function of a plurality of administrative functions implemented by the network-based auction facility.

38. The system of claim 37 wherein the note function is accessed via an Application Program Interface (API).

39. The system of claim 27 including a note search application that searches a plurality of notes to locate a note based on the selected aspect.

40. The system of claim 27 wherein the note display application displays a graphic icon adjacent a text identifier for the selected aspect.

41. A system to communicate information concerning a user of a network-based auction facility, the system including:

a note creation function to facilitate creation of a note concerning the user of the network-based auction facility; and

an administrative function automatically to invoke the note creation function from one of a plurality of administrative applications of the network-based auction facility,

where the note creation function is to associate the note with the user, as identified by an administrator of the network-based auction facility to the note creation function.

42. The system of claim 41 including a note creation user interface, that is invokable by the note creation function, that presents a predetermined set of note types for selection by the administrator, each note type providing a reason for creation of the note.

43. The system of claim 42 wherein the note creation interface presents the predetermined set of note types for selection to the administrator as a drop-down menu.

44. The system of claim 42 wherein the note creation user interface prompts the user for any one of a group of information items to be included within the note concerning the user including a user identifier and whether the user is to be suspended.

45. The system of claim 15 including a note search function that

facilitates the searching of a plurality of notes based on user information.

46. The system of claim 41 including a note search function that facilitates the searching of a plurality of notes based on auction item information.

47. The system of claim 41 including a note search function that facilitates the searching of a plurality of notes based on type information, specifying a reason for the creation of the note.

48. The system of claim 41 including a note search function that facilitates searching of a plurality of notes based on addressor information.

49. The system of claim 41 including a note search function that facilitates searching of a plurality of notes based on addressee information.

50. The system of claim 45 wherein the note search function requires verification of identity of the administrator before permitting the search.

51. The system of claim 41 wherein the note creation function is to purge the note after an indicated expiration period.

52. A system to communicate information within a network-based auction facility, the system including:

means for facilitating creation of a note pertaining to a selected aspect of an on-line auction facilitated by the network-based auction facility, and for associating the note with the selected aspect of the on-line auction; and

means for displaying a note indicator to indicate an association of the note with the selected aspect of the on-line auction when displaying information concerning the selected aspect on a display unit of a network device.